



Queenie Jean Is in Trouble Again

Christine Read

Wandering Fox (Apr 2, 2024)

Softcover \$14.95 (224pp)

978-1-77203-479-0

In Christine Read's novel *Queenie Jean Is in Trouble Again*, a lonely fifth grader with ADHD tries to fit in at a new school.

In her new school, Queenie hopes for an understanding principal, a caring teacher, and just one girl to be her best friend. But trouble begins the night before her first day of school: her father cuts her hair spiky short in order to remove bubblegum from it. And more trouble finds Queenie, who makes impromptu decisions and fidgets her way through classes. Her short attention span and longing to find a friend distract her from working on her mandatory speech, which is to be given in front of the school and her family members.

Queenie's fears over starting over are compounded by outside pressure to stay out of trouble—as well as by her ADHD. The symptoms of ADHD misrepresent the creative, enthusiastic person she is, though. And the challenges that she faces, including first-day jitters and when it comes to making friends, are complicated by her related mannerisms. Problem-solving takes her a little longer. Still, she is a determined heroine who overcomes each hurdle without conforming to “normal” standards.

Queenie narrates. She delivers beautiful insights into how her mind works because of her ADHD: her thought processes are erratic; she faces emotional turmoil; her critical thinking works differently. Lengthy paragraphs are devoted to her thoughts, representing multiple ideas and lots of energy. And when she's in conversation with others, the differences are also apparent: she speaks at length; their contributions are shorter and more serious in tone.

In the inspiring novel *Queenie Jean Is in Trouble Again*, a girl shows that there is more than one right way to handle life's challenges.

MARY MCNICHOL (March / April 2024)

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